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THE USE OF BOOKS AND LIBRARIES.

THERE is, perhaps, no one in an educational institution who appreciates more keenly the great inequality of the book environment of the students than does the librarian.

One child has heard the best literature in song and story from the time he was an infant in arms. He has been told the simple folk- and fairy-tales of many countries. He has grown up in a home where there is a large library, and he has browsed among the beautifully printed and illustrated works of the masters of literature. His parents and tutors have taken him to the large public and private libraries in the city, and he has afterward chosen to spend many of his leisure hours among their treasures. Authors, artists, travelers, and scientists have frequented his home. He has had a natural love for literature, and he has lived up to the opportunities offered him. This youth enters college on exactly the same basis as the boy who was born of a poor, ignorant mother with neither the time nor the knowledge to tell him the stories he should have known in his childhood. He has had practically no books in his home. His life has been spent on a farm or in a small village quite out of the reach of a library. He has traveled none, and his companions have had no better advantages than himself, and much less ambition and ability. These are extreme types, to be sure, but extremes that are actually met in a college library, and the remaining student body arrays itself between these wide limits.

In the institutions for higher learning all the subjects are presented by specialists, few of whom recognize this inequality in their students. They assign the students certain books to use in the class room; they refer to various books and authors heretofore unknown to the student; they sometimes refer to various classes of books in different libraries; or again they may tell the students to find what they can that has been written on a given subject. The librarian knows that these are difficult problems for the boy who is using a large library for

the first time, and he knows that the majority of students waste hours of time because they do not know how to use books and libraries economically. It is to be regretted that the students have not gained a more systematic knowledge of the use of books before they have reached college. It would have saved them many hours of unnecessary work, and helped them so to arrange and classify their knowledge and material that they would have been much farther on their way. It is certainly possible to do considerable in this line for them long before they have reached college age.

Books may be divided into two general groups—those that are one's friends and those that are one's tools. It is of the greatest importance that the standards of choice of both tools and friends be high. True standards are usually the results of slow growth, and begin in early years. It is in the home that the child is introduced into the mysteries and beauties of book-land. Mothers who buy the largest and brightest colored picture-books on the bargain counters in the department stores have probably never considered how poor a foundation they are laying for their children's appreciation of books. It is necessary for the mother to join the teacher and librarian in their search for the picture-books with the best color, drawing, and subject-matter, of which we have splendid examples in Boutet de Monvel, Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway, and Cecil Alden. One feels that the child who has not learned from his own mother the "Mother Goose" rhymes and such stories as "The Three Bears," "Little Red Riding Hood," and "Sleeping Beauty" has been deprived of a certain quality that belongs to these stories which the teacher and librarian can never supply. Some of the public libraries are trying to meet this problem by inviting the mothers to visit the children's room and examine the books they have so carefully selected. They urge the parents to bring their little children with them, and have bought cloth and board books for the youngest which they can take to their homes.

The child's knowledge of the book begins to develop very rapidly when he goes to school and learns to read. In the

primary grades of some schools each child makes a dictionary for himself and binds it in an appropriate cover. He thus early learns the alphabetic order and a simple form of constructing a book.

A pleasant and profitable relationship has been established between many schools and libraries where the teachers have asked the librarian to visit their schools and tell the children about the library, and the librarian has invited the teachers to come to the library and let her show them where the "most interesting books" are kept. This seems to be an excellent plan, if one can judge from the children who often return to become the library's steady patrons, and who would probably never have found their way there except in some such way as this.

If a person has not grown up with books and had the opportunity of handling them freely, there seems to always remain with him a certain fear and awkwardness in using them. The public library of today, with its carefully selected shelves in which the child can revel at its will, is giving him a splendid chance to make true and lasting friends and to broaden and find new interests. But even browsing, with all its virtues, must be somewhat guarded lest it become mere dissipation.

There is a certain systematic use of books which the child needs to be taught as he advances in the grades. Most of our modern libraries use one scheme of classification for their books and material. The general underlying principles of all plans of classification used today are the same, and the tendency is to give all readers as free access to the shelves as is possible. The youngest children are shown where the picture-books are kept. The older children find that the books are divided on the shelves according to their subjects, and that these subjects have an order of sequence. They are old enough now so that they begin to ask for certain books by name instead of color; they want books by a certain author and on a given subject. This is the time to explain to them the card catalogue, how it is arranged, and what it contains. Slowly and carefully the child should be introduced to the reference-books as they can serve him, and he should early be taught to compare and choose his authorities.

Gradually the intricacies of classification begin to unfold themselves, and he more plainly sees that the three fundamental ways of arranging material are chronologically, alphabetically, and by a certain scheme of arbitrary symbols; and also that there are many possible combinations of these methods. The book itself should be carefully studied—the binding with its design and the information that it bears, the title-page and its information, the arrangement of the table of contents and index, their purposes and comparative value, the relation each bears to the information given in the book, the aim of the preface and introduction, the various forms of chapter headings, pagination, notes, and bibliographic references.

The making of a book is a process that can be advantageously adapted to the handwork in the grades. The material used may be printed by the children or done with prettily illuminated letters. The title-page, introduction, chapter headings, contents, index, and pagination should be made in the style of the best books, and the whole bound with an appropriate cover design. The making of one such volume will give the child an appreciation of a book and a knowledge of its artistic and economic features that will usually make lasting impressions. This work may well be supplemented by visits to local binderies, booksellers, and museums where rare books are kept. It would be a great help to students if they were given some instruction in the taking and arrangement of notes which would enable them to make intercalations and additions from year to year, and still permit of a quick and advantageous use. As independence in study is gained in the high school, this work should be expanded.

In view of the fact that heretofore the lower schools have almost wholly neglected this work, it seems as if the most economic step to be taken is to adapt a course similar to the one just outlined, which should be introduced into the freshman year of college and into all institutions having to do with the training of teachers. Such a course need not be a lengthy one. It might divide itself into a consideration of the three following general subjects:

1. A study of the principles of the administration and organization of the library of the educational institution in which the

course is given. A general survey of the library facilities in the community and country which may be of use to the student.

2. The construction of a book.

3. The use of the best general reference-books, dictionaries, cyclopædias, atlases, gazateers, periodical indexes, bibliographies, and reading lists.

Book information often becomes isolated to the student, and in no way related to material and action. The book seems to be the most common way of conveying information, but there is no doubt but that the information desired could often be more quickly obtained if maps, pictures, charts, and specimens could be as readily interpreted. Training in the use of these other mediums is much to be desired.

The library is an important factor in every community and institution. Massachusetts has supplied all but one or two of its small villages with libraries, and these are reached by the traveling libraries. The other states are holding this as their example. The nation, the states, and the cities are taxing themselves to establish free public libraries for their people. Philanthropists are giving enormous sums of money to further the work. Librarians have found that they cannot meet the public demand by arranging their material on a scholarly basis unless they add to that a good strong business basis that will enable them to serve their patrons with as much certainty as do the best business houses of today. The well-organized libraries are strongly influencing the methods of instruction in our educational institutions. The National Educational Association has a library section devoted to the relation of libraries to schools. The state teachers' associations are forming library sections. A number of normal schools and colleges are offering courses such as this paper has outlined, which are of the most elementary kind, but open the way to extended bibliographic research. There are many encouraging beginnings in these lines, but at present the educational forces, as they touch the library problem, leave yawning gaps in some places and extravagantly overlap in others.

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